Findings about age of nursery students

1355. SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of the study conducted by Researchers from Oxford University and the Institute of Fiscal Studies, wherein it has been stated that children under three and a half years of age attending nursery classes, are likely to become upset and also display anti-social behaviour; and

(b) if so, whether this Study coupled with recent suggestions of Ganguly Committee, banning admission of below $3^1/_2$ years children, become benchmark, resulting in gradual closure of play schools, etc., where children of more than two years are very often admitted?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) and (b) The Government is not aware of the study conducted by Researcher from Oxford University and the Institute of Fiscal Studies. However, as per information furnished by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT), early introduction to a formal curriculum may increase anxiety and have a negative impact on children's self esteem and motivation to learn. The Ganguly Committee, in its report on Pre-Primary and Pre-School Education in Delhi submitted to the Hon'ble High Court of Delhi, observed and recommended that pre-school education should be for one year and the age should be four plus as on 31st March of the year of admission to pre-primary class.

Quality in higher education

1356. SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether he has expressed concern for the lack of quality in higher education;

(b) if so, whether he has described higher education as the sick child of education, and not serving the cause of the young people in the country;

(c) if so, the main reasons for the same;

(d) whether the Planning Commission had also expressed concern over the quality of higher education; and

(e) if so, the measures and steps Government is considering to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) to (c): Yes, Sir. While referring to the declining public investment in higher education over the years adversely affecting the university system, attention of participants at the Conference of Vice Chancellor was drawn to the need for remedial measures for strengthening higher education.

(d) and (e): A substantial increase in Plan allocation is envisaged in the XI Plan for the expansion of higher education, for setting up of institutions such as Central Universities in uncovered States, establishment of World Class Universities, Indian Institutes of Technology, Indian Institutes of Management, Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research, Indian Institutes of Information Technology and Schools for Planning and Architecture. Expansion of capacity of the existing institutions, incentivising State